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Idaho State Department of Education

June 24, 2010

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IDAHO JOINS 31-STATE CONSORTIUM TO BUILD NEXT GENERATION OF ASSESSMENTS

BOISE – Idaho has joined 30 other states to work toward building the next generation of assessments to measure student achievement, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna announced today.

Idaho is a lead state in the 31-state SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which submitted an application this week for a federal grant to help develop the next generation of student assessments to provide more meaningful, responsive data to parents, educators and policymakers so they can make the best possible decisions for Idaho students.

“This is a great step forward for Idaho. By working with 30 other states, we will create improved assessment tools that Idaho educators can use in the classroom throughout the school year to guide instruction and inform decision-making at every level,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said. “The goal is to ensure every student who graduates from an Idaho high school is prepared to go on to postsecondary education or the workforce without the need for remediation. To reach this goal, we must have high-quality assessment tools in place at all levels to measure student progress.”

Idaho is a governing state in the SMARTER Balanced Consortium, taking a lead role throughout this process. The consortium was initially formed in December 2009. After months of work, the group submitted a \$160 million application for the federal Race to the Top Assessment Grant. The grant money would be utilized over four years. Only two such grants will be awarded nationwide.

With this grant, the SMARTER Balanced Consortium would develop an assessment system to measure student achievement in grades 3-8 and 11, including assessing problem solving and complex thinking skills. States will have the option of adding assessments in grades 9 and 10. The assessment system will include end-of-year assessments and assessment tools for teachers throughout the school year.

The assessments will be tied to the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a state-led initiative to raise the bar on standards in math and English language arts. Idaho is a part of this voluntary, state-led Initiative. The State Board of Education and Idaho Legislature will be deciding in the coming year whether or not to adopt the Common Core State Standards.

Teachers in Idaho and other participating states will be involved at all stages of item and test development, including writing, scoring and the design of reporting systems. Educators will also be able to access a reporting system that identifies each student’s strengths, weakness and progress toward college and career readiness.

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The U.S. Department of Education is expected to announce the grant awards in September 2010. States in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium will share many of the development costs of the assessment system.

Learn more about the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER>. Learn more about the Common Core State Standards Initiative at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/common/>.

Here is a list of states participating in the SMARTER Balanced Consortium:

- Alabama
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin

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